

Guide for Selecting Wrestling Equipment

Physiotherapy in Comox for Wrestling

Welcome to Bodyworx Physiotherapy Pilates & Health's guide for selecting wrestling equipment.

Bodyworx Physiotherapy Pilates & Health provides services for physiotherapy in Comox. We recommend a few general considerations for selecting your wrestling equipment in order to stay comfortable and minimize injury while participating.

Headgear

At most amateur levels headgear is mandatory as wrestler's ears are particularly vulnerable to injury and infection. Headgear is designed specifically to protect the ears from the repetitive friction that occurs between the opponent's body parts as well as the mats. Repetitive friction can lead to the common wrestling ear injury called 'cauliflower ear' which can be painful and, if advanced, quite aesthetically unpleasing (see common wrestling injuries.) The headgear in wrestling, unlike many other sports, is not designed to specifically provide protection against impact to the skull or brain. For this reason the development of good wrestling technique focused on minimizing the impact to the head is essential. Choose headgear that provides a rigid shield over the ears, is well-fitted, light, comfortable, allows adequate hearing, and that has a snug fitted chin strap. It is important that the fit is tight enough such that the headgear does not slip or get pulled off the ears. Trying on several designs in the store will be helpful in finding a comfortable fit.

Singlet

A wrestling singlet is a one-piece, tight-fitting lycra or nylon uniform that is worn by both male and female wrestlers. Women's singlets differ from mens mainly in that they are higher cut and designed to more closely fit the contours of a woman's body. The tight fit of the singlet allows the referee to clearly see where the wrestler's body is in order to award points or penalties, but it also helps to ensure that the fingers don't accidentally get caught in the uniform when trying to take the opponent down. For these reasons, when choosing a singlet, it is important to ensure that it is well fitted but not too tight for comfort. Many singlets are now made with moisture-wicking material which would be recommended if available.

Pads (Knee & Elbow)

Due to the constant friction and impact on both the knees and elbows during wrestling, pads for both these areas are recommended although they are not mandatory. There are several varieties of pads although traditionally they tend to be thinner than the protective pads used in many other sports and are fitted like a sleeve that covers the joint as well as a large portion of the skin both above and below the joint. Choose pads that fit well to the circumference of your limb and do not slide down easily. In addition, ensure the padding portion covers your joint adequately and be sure to adjust the pad position as necessary to provide maximum protection to the bony areas of the joint. If you have a pre-existing injury to either your elbow or knee, it would be recommended to purchase a thicker pad to provide optimal protection.

Mouth Guard

Mouth guards are designed to absorb some of the impact from blows to the jaw and teeth and it is recommended that they be worn when wrestling. Standard mouth guards are available in most sporting

stores, but they tend to be bulky and do not provide good protection due to their inability to mold to individual teeth configurations. A moldable plastic mouth guard is also often available in sporting stores and is an alternative to the standard mouth guard. These types of guards are made from a soft moldable plastic that can be melted in hot water and then placed in the mouth so that they mold to the shape of the teeth. These guards can still feel bulky and therefore may interfere with breathing, however, they would be recommended above the standard guard. If you are an avid wrestler, it would be worthy to get a custom fitted mouth guard to provide maximum protection. These guards are made by a dental professional and molded from a special shock absorbing material. Custom mouth guards mold exactly to the fit of the individual player's mouth anatomy and therefore provide maximum protection.

Footwear

Footwear selection is crucial for all wrestlers in order to maximize grip on the mat, mobility of the foot, and to prevent injury. Wrestling shoes have developed broadly over the years and those commonly used today are of a high-top laced variety with a flexible rubber sole. They are meant to have a very snug fit for maximum mobility but will stretch with use so it is advised to choose a small fit when purchasing. Regulations often require the laces to be covered to avoid the accidental snagging of fingers, so it would be advisable to buy a shoe that is designed with this lace cover, however, tape over the laces can serve the same purpose if cost becomes an issue. In regards to the sole, there are either split soles or unisoles. Split soles are designed with separate pieces of rubber under the heel and ball of the foot whereas unisoles are comprised of one single piece of rubber for the entire sole. Split soles claim to improve quickness and allow greater flexibility of the foot whereas unisoles are said to provide improved traction. From an injury perspective, neither shoe is better or worse than the other so comfort becomes the deciding factor. The high top design of a wrestling shoe provides protection to the ankle joint when well fitted, so again, ensure the shoe fits well in both the forefoot but also around the ankle. In addition, in order to gain maximum protection out of the high top design, ensure that when you are tying up the shoe, the laces are pulled and tied firmly.

Hydration Gear

Keeping hydrated will help you stay alert while wrestling. It may also help to prevent muscle cramps and will help your post match recovery. Taking your own drink bottles to training or a match helps you to keep track of your fluid intake. We recommend that you drink about 300-400 mL before you play (ref: http://www.ausport.gov.au/sportscoachmag/nutrition2/pre-event_nutrition), and 250mL (1 cup) of water or sports drink every 20 minutes of physical playing/training time and for one hour after your match. These are just general guidelines as fluid requirements will vary depending on the environmental conditions and your body size. Remember, the more fluid you lose through sweat, the more you will have to replace. Also, remember that by the time you feel thirsty, your body is already dehydrated, so drink frequently and don't let thirst alone determine your fluid intake. In order to check that you are adequately hydrating, you can watch your weight before and after your match which is a common objective measure for wrestlers anyways. If your weight remains the same then you are likely to be well hydrated. Dehydrating prior to a wrestling match weigh-in to lose weight is not a recommended activity as it dehydrates your entire system and affects the body's ability to function, which is not optimal for peak athletic performance.